



Cuba: A Nation Becoming a University

Universalisation of the University

The central idea within the German Karl Marx's "Capital", and within the Brazilian Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", is the full restoration of the human Subject as an individual, within human society, making humanity out of a material world.

The dialectic of the individual and the collective was well expressed by Marx and his friend Frederick Engels when they wrote, in the Communist Manifesto of 1848:

"In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

The SACP's constitutional stricture is to "Educate, Organise and Mobilise". Education is the means by which organising and mobilising are done. Education is more than a preparation for politics. Education is the method of politics and the substance of politics, which, when considered broadly, excludes all other substances. Education is the essence of humanism.

We have looked at N F S Grundtvig's vanguard role in relation to the Danish Folk-High-Schools, institutions which played a major part in the reconstruction of that country as a modern nation, even though bourgeois, and even though still having a king or a queen.

In the present time another and more advanced illustration of the idea of education as the substance of political practice is Cuba, a country that has become one big university, and a "society of knowledge".

Please see the article (download linked below) by the US philosopher Cliff DuRand for an exposition of this concept, including what is called the "[Universalisation of the University](#)".

"Raising the cultural and educational level of the entire [Cuban] population has become a central focus," writes DuRand.

This is what South Africa needs to do, for all the reasons mentioned by DuRand, and for additional reasons having to do with our own history.

As is the case with China, in relation to town planning, for example, where the Chinese are the leaders in the world today, Cuban literature on educational theory is hard, or practically impossible, to find in English translation on the Internet.

Cliff DuRand has done a good job with this article in terms of problematising education in the Cuban context, and showing how education can be seen as the answer to nation-building problems even in what appear to be unfavourable circumstances, such as youth unemployment, and what he calls “class closure”.

In the next item, concluding this part, we will have Frantz Fanon’s (Martinique; Algeria) views about development and education, with reference to countries in Africa that had newly become independent at the time of his writing.

As a taster, here is one sentence from Fanon that fits well with DuRand’s article:

“If nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism, it leads up a blind alley.”

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Cuba - A Nation Becoming a University, DuRand, MRZine.](#)
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here.](#)